



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

Cat Spraying Solutions

A new cat has recently moved into the apartment next to yours, and your resident feline seems to be heralding the newcomer in his own way. You've caught him standing near the front door, posed with his tail straight up in the air as he sends a stream of strong-smelling urine down the wall. What gives? Your cat is exhibiting a very common feline behavior known as spraying.

While it is not clear whether cats spray to claim territory or to warn trespassers to stay away, the behavior is usually accompanied by some sort of stress. Spraying may be brought on by the arrival of a new person, animal, or even piece of furniture into the household.

Some indoor-only cats may begin spraying when they see new cats in backyard courtyards or out of windows. In this case, the best course of action is to block a cat's access to those views until the newcomer strays can be spayed or neutered. And although both males and females spray, almost all unneutered toms begin spraying to attract potential mates and ward off rivals when they reach sexual maturity. What can you do if your cat's taken to

spraying? First, check with your veterinarian to make sure that your cat's spraying habit isn't the result of a medical problem. Once your vet gives your cat a clean bill of health, try the following.

If he or she hasn't yet been neutered, make that appointment today! If your unneutered male cat has just started to spray, very often neutering will put a stop to this behavior.

To discourage repeat offenses, it is important that you remove all traces of the urine from furniture, rugs, walls and any other objects that your cat has deposited his scent on. You can use a solution of water and vinegar or an odor neutralizer, available at pet-supply stores. To eliminate the odor, it's important to use a product that is safe for use around your cat and is not just a perfume cover-up. Be sure to follow manufacturer's instructions.

Unfortunately, if your cat has been allowed to spray for some time, as is the case with many rescued tom cats, neutering alone may not solve the problem. In this instance, it is recommended that you consult a professional behavior counselor.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs,
call (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov

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